

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

175 Ways to Get More Less Time!

by David

Cottrell and Mark ISBN:09

C. Layton

CornerStone Leadership

© 2004 (36 pages)



Achieve all the goals you yourself with the help of useful guide. The book is with ways to get things faster and better so you accomplish more of your term goals.

Table of Contents

[175 Ways to Get More Done In Less Time](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Getting Started...On The Right](#)
[Your Work Space...Home Sweet Home](#)

[The Work Environment](#) - Color Y
- World.
Produc

[Interruptions...The Office Plague](#)
[The Phone, Voice Mail, And E-Mail...The Invisible Invaders](#)
[Meetings...Making The Most Of Them](#)

On The Road...Making Time
Organizing Yourself...First Thing
FIRST
Time For Yourself...And What's
Important

Back Cover

Want to get things done faster so you can accomplish more of your long-term goals? Okay. We'd all like that to happen. But the question we finally have to ask is "How can I do that - get more things done in less time?"

This book is loaded with ideas. Now, don't expect smoke and mirrors here. And don't look to magically pull a few extra hours for your day out of thin air. Nope, there's no magic

formula. But, between the front and back covers of the book you'll find 175 really really good suggestions that will help you get things done faster ... and usually better.

Before you know it, you're back in control - actually achieving those goals you've set for yourself.

About the Authors

David Cottrell, President and CEO of CornerStone Leadership, is an

internationally known leadership consultant, seminar leader and speaker. His business experience includes senior management positions with Xerox and FedEx. He also led the successful turnaround of a chapter eleven company before founding CornerStone. He is author of *Monday Morning Leadership; Birdies, Pars, & Bogies: Leadership Lessons from the Links; Leadership...Biblically Speaking: The Power of Principle-Based Leadership; 175 Ways to Get More Done in Less Time; Listen*

*Up, Leader; Listen Up,
Customer Service; and
Becoming the Obvious Choice.*

Mark C. Layton is Chairman,
President and Chief Executive
Officer of PFSweb Inc.
(Nasdaq: PFSW), a leading
Internet logistics provider
headquartered in Plano, Texas.
Layton, a 1981 graduate of
Northern Arizona University is
a recognized leader in the
utilization of technology in
business. He is highly sought
public speaker on issues
including electronic commerce,

leadership, technology trends, supply chain management, web-enabled call centers, financial management, and Christian principals in business. Mr. Layton is the co-author of *Listen Up, Customer Service, 175 Ways to Get More Done in Less Time* and is the author of *.coms or .bombs... Strategies for profit in e-Business*.

175 Ways to Get More Done In Less Time

by David Cottrell and Mark Layton

For more information on
CornerStone Leadership
products and services call 1-888-
789-LEAD or visit

www.cornerstoneleadership.com

Copyright © 2003, 2004
CornerStone Leadership Institute
and Profits in e-Business, LLC

No part of this book may be
reproduced in any form without

written permission in advance from the publisher. International rights and foreign translations available only through negotiation with CornerStone Leadership Institute.

Inquiries regarding permission for use of the material contained in this book should be addressed to:

CornerStone Leadership Institute
P.O. Box 764087
Dallas, TX 75376
888.789.LEAD

Printed in the United States of

America

ISBN: 0-9658788-4-8

Book design: Precision Type

Cover Design: ConceptFX

How To Get The Most Out Of This Book!

- Read with a highlighter in your hand. Mark key words or phrases that pertain to your personal situation.
- Search for the first tip you can use to save ten minutes today!

- Share this book with your spouse, coworkers and friends.
- Enjoy the time of your life!

About the Authors

David Cottrell, President and CEO of CornerStone Leadership, is an internationally known leadership consultant, seminar leader and speaker. His business experience includes senior management positions with Xerox and FedEx. He also led the

successful turnaround of a chapter eleven company before founding CornerStone. He is author of Monday Morning Leadership; Birdies, Pars, & Bogies: Leadership Lessons from the Links; Leadership...Biblically Speaking: The Power of Principle-Based Leadership; 175 Ways to Get More Done in Less Time; Listen Up, Leader; Listen Up, Customer Service; and Becoming the Obvious Choice.

Mark C. Layton is Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of PFSweb Inc. (Nasdaq: PFSW), a leading Internet

logistics provider headquartered in Plano, Texas. Layton, a 1981 graduate of Northern Arizona University is a recognized leader in the utilization of technology in business. He is highly sought public speaker on issues including electronic commerce, leadership, technology trends, supply chain management, web-enabled call centers, financial management, and Christian principals in business. Mr. Layton is the co-author of Listen Up, Customer Service, 175 Ways to Get More Done in Less Time and is the author of .coms or

.bombs...Strategies for profit in
e-Business.

Introduction

Want to get things done faster so you can accomplish more of your long-term goals? Okay. We'd all like that to happen. But the question we finally have to ask is, "How can I do that — get more things done in less time?"

This book is loaded with ideas. But to get more done in less time, we have to make choices — and remember it is your life we're talking about.

Now, don't expect smoke and mirrors here. And don't look to

magically pull a few extra hours for your day out of thin air. Nope, there's no magic formula. But, between the front and back covers of this book you'll find 175 really, really good suggestions that will help you get things done faster...and usually better.

Notice, too — this book cuts to the chase:

- No flowery prose.
- No unnecessary charts or diagrams.

Just good, common sense

suggestions that will help you make conscious decisions to increase your quality of life.

Search for that nugget of wisdom that will give you 10, 20, or 30 extra minutes a day. Then find another...and another...and another.

You may also want to try this approach: Select one or two of the tips each week. Describe the tip briefly with your staff at your team meeting and ask for everyone to try this week's tip. Every environment is different, but chances are that some will

stick with your team and result in exponential time savings for all involved.

Before you know it, you're back in control — actually achieving those goals you've set for yourself.

What better time to get started than the present? Like today!

Remember...the meter is ticking!

Getting Started...On The Right Foot

*“Nothing is so fatiguing as
the eternal hanging on of an
uncompleted task.”*

—William James

1

It always helps to **know where your time is going**. So, keep track of how you spend your time for two weeks. Sound dull? Boring, maybe? So cut it down to a couple of days. Surprise! Most of your log will show you're investing your time in people or things not really important to you or your goals.

2

Focus, focus, **focus on STARTING tasks** rather than finishing them. The greatest challenge is taking the first step and getting started. (Ah yes – doesn't that feel good?)

3

Every day something unexpected is going to happen. Count on it! So, **set aside some “Oops time!”** Don't let these emergencies disrupt the rest of your day. Plan for them, act on them and then get back to work.

4

Think on paper. **Writing things down minimizes confusion and stress.** Write down your goals, to-do lists, and even the problems that you're working on. You'll find putting things on paper usually clarifies the situation. Committing things to memory can be a waste of brain power, not to mention a poor storage device as well.

5

Categorize your To Do list into A, B, and C priorities. “A”

priorities are the activities that are critical for your success. “B” priorities are important but not critical. “C” priorities would be nice to do if you get the time.

Begin with your “A” priorities and work your way to the “nice to do” items.

6

Here's a suggestion that will help everyone: **create a “talk” file** for your boss, subordinates, peers and even your customers. Unless it is a real emergency, wait until you have at least two items in the file before calling that person with your questions.

7

Get a spiral-bound notebook, date it, and keep all your notes in the book for future reference.

Quit writing on loose papers or sticky notes that tend to get lost.

8

Try something new. **Read (really) the instruction manual** that came with your electronic organizer. Even better, try the manufacturer's web site to find new software updates and releases that may further your productivity. Bet you will find several time management tools you haven't used. Let the organizer do the work so you can spend less time organizing yourself.



9

Use **only one time management system**. Whether you choose an electronic or paper system, one consistent system will eliminate much wasted time spent searching for information.

10

Abracadabra! **Take a speed-reading course.** You could already be a lot further along in this book!

How about all those passwords? Tough to remember? **Simplify your passwords** and have a logical, easy to remember reason for selecting each. Trying to remember a password is frustrating and a total waste of time. You may want to select passwords that can be typed on the keyboard with one hand so your other hand is free.

12

Take a Saturday and **devote two hours to reorganizing yourself.**

Take a fresh look at how you are organized and look for opportunities to improve. You will probably discover several areas where you can eliminate some personal time wasters simply by becoming a little better organized.

Create a “quiet time” for planning. Let everyone know your closed door means “do not disturb” unless there is an emergency...or someone in your family calls.

Throw things away! Yes, even those ticket stubs from the last football game. Ask yourself, “What is the worst thing that could happen if I throw this away?” Most of the time, you can live with your answer, so start filling that wastebasket!

15

Date stamp (ker-chunk) every item that hits your desk. This will help you decide when to file or throw away the paper.

16

If you get heartburn from throwing paper away, create a drawer or file to **store your stuff for 90 days**. If you have not used it within 90 days, you can safely throw those “keepers” away.

17

Still not comfortable — even after the 90 days? Then **find the “office pack rat”** and become their new best friend. Someone around the office has a copy of every memo and report from the past 10 years. Love that person — but throw your trash away.

Trust me on this, too! Most of all filed materials over a year old are never needed again. **Archive the files** and get them out of your way. If possible handle the paper only once and avoid the “I’ll just put it here for now” habit.

19

The key to paper management — **KEEP IT MOVING!** (Now, how simple can we get?) Move the paper to your out basket, your file, your “to read” folder or to your trash. Don’t let paper just sit.

20

Wait! Do these three things before you leave the office: (1) **clear** your desk, (2) **plan** tomorrow's activities and (3) **enter** your next day's to-do list in your organizer. Then go home. Planning the next day before you leave reduces stress and allows you to enjoy your time away from the office.

Your Work Space... Home Sweet Home

*What's man's best friend
(besides the dog)?*

The wastebasket! –
Business Week

Okay, listen up! **Clear your desk...NOW!** Despite what some people believe, a cluttered desk does not indicate genius. Au contraire! It signals confusion and creates stress. Even mini-clutter will grow and eventually fill every inch. Keep your desk clear of everything except your project du jour and your family picture.

22

Get rid of that paper! Shuffling and reshuffling paper from pile to pile or file to file wastes time and keeps you from focusing on what needs to get done. **Find a gigantic wastebasket and fill it up.** The larger the wastebasket, the more you will use it. Throwing things away then becomes an art. Enjoy!

Files should not be an obstacle course. **Put your most often reviewed files at the front of the cabinet.** Here is a test to see if your current filing system works. Within two minutes, can you retrieve any paper you need? Go. If you failed the test you are wasting time searching through your files.

Never clear off your desk by randomly throwing things in a drawer. Gotcha! You will eventually have to go through that drawer. Instead, **create a logical system for storing** these items in your desk.

25

A picture or two on your desk is probably not distracting, but **limit pictures to a special few.** The more pictures on your desk, the more distractions and interruptions you invite.

Organize your desktop! If you are right-handed, make sure the **phone is located on the left side of your desk**. You want to keep the right side of the desk (and your right hand) free to take notes. Just the opposite for lefties.

Right-handed people should place the **calculator on the right side** of their desk. Ditto the above for southpaws, the proud but under-represented!

Avoid glass desktops. They glare and are hard to keep clean. You don't need to spend valuable time wiping off fingerprints.

If a report comes across your desk that you can't use, notify the sender and **ask to be deleted from distribution**. The key question to ask is, "Would I pay for this report if I had to?" If not, get rid of it.

If you only use a few lines of a report, **ask for a reformat**, if possible. Four pages when you need four lines just doesn't make sense — does it?

“If you want to make an easy job seem mighty hard, just keep putting off doing it.”

Olin Miller

The Work Environment: **Color Your World... Productive**

*“It is better to strike a
straight blow with a crooked
stick than spend my whole
life trying to straighten the
darn thing out.”*

—Ken Blanchard

Now hear this! Never say “yes” without considering the time investment you are committing. Having the **courage to say “no”** to requests that are inappropriate or unnecessary could be your most effective time management tool!

Take the time to **understand the role of every department** in your organization. This time invested up front will eliminate your “panic” when someone has an urgent request outside your department.

“Perfection paralysis” is expensive. Sometimes it is not worth the effort to make things “perfect.” Take a look at time costs involved and weigh these against the benefit of perfection. Many times second best in operation is better than first best on the drawing board.

Copy the world every time you send a memo? But, realistically, does “the world” really care? When writing a memo or sending an e-mail, **only distribute to the people who really need to know** the information. Some of “the world” feels obligated to respond and then everyone’s time is wasted.

34

Want to get your written point across — fast? **Limit your sentences to fifteen words.**

Are you really listening! Every time you say, “But I thought you said,” you might as well be saying, “I wasted all this time doing the wrong thing.” **Listen, clarify, and make sure you understand** the task before going forward. It is a good time investment for both parties.

36

Is it your job to **pick up every ball that someone drops**? Avoid this label at all costs! Think about it!

Don't try to solve other people's problems. You may be empathetic to their situation, but if you spend your time solving their problems, Surprise! Their next problem will become yours, too! The best thing you can do is help others learn how to solve their own problems.

Interruptions...The Office Plague

“‘Got a minute?’ never means just one minute. Before you answer, always ask, ‘What’s this about?’”

— Alec Mackenzie

“Hey, you got a minute?” That’s a question, not a demand. **Don’t get angry** with the interrupter if you answered, “Sure!” to their question. General rule: If you cannot eliminate the interruption, **make the interruption as short as possible.**

39

When people arrive to interrupt, **meet them at the door** and talk outside your office. Letting them in may add minutes to the interruption.

Stand up! When someone shows up unannounced, keep standing until you decide if you want the conversation to continue. Standing is not comfortable for most people and the length of most interruptions is in direct proportion to the comfort level of the interrupter.

41

Signal the end of the time allotted by politely saying, “**One more thing before you go.**” Be respectful but take control. Remember that this is your office and you’re responsible for the time here.

Get rid of extra chairs in your office. You can always pull one from somewhere else if you need it.

43

Arrange your office so that your **desk doesn't face the door.**

People are less likely to interrupt if they can't see your face.

Keep track of the origins of your interruptions. Don't be surprised to **find your biggest interrupter** is your boss! After getting over the shock, sit down with your boss and see if you can find ways to decrease the number of interruptions so that you can be more productive.

45

Schedule “one-on-one” sessions with your staff and boss. Gather everything you need to talk about and **take care of it at one sitting** rather than interrupting each other the minute something comes up.

46

When you don't want to be disturbed, **put your candy dish away**. It is an interrupter magnet!



Give yourself a break! You can **accomplish 60-minutes'** worth of interrupted work **in just 20 minutes** of non-interrupted work. Is there a better investment of your time?

Want to **make a positive difference** in the time investment of your company? Ask your peers and subordinates, “What do I do that wastes your time and hinders your performance?”

Henry Ford was always dropping into the offices of his company's executives. When asked why he didn't have them come to him, he replied, 'Well, I'll tell you. I've found that I can **leave the other fellow's office a lot quicker** than I can get him to leave mine.

“Guard your own spare moments. They are like uncut diamonds.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Phone, Voice Mail, And E-Mail...The Invisible Invaders

*“Time flies. It is up to you to
be the navigator.”*

—Robert Orben

Tempted to **constantly check your e-mails? Don't do it!** Once or twice daily is usually enough. Check your e-mails, respond and get back on task. E-mails can be a habitual distraction. You do not go to the mailbox every 30 minutes, do you? Work e-mail deliveries into your personal schedule and do not let them control your day.

51

Prioritize your incoming e-mail by **sorting the messages by subject or author** so you can process related messages together.

Keep an active address book to save e-mail addresses. Re-typing e-mail addresses for people who you frequently send messages to is a waste of your time.

Check your **voicemails twice a day ONLY!** Write down the message in your organizer. Return all of the calls before you check your voicemail again.

On your voicemail recording, clearly **state when the person calling may expect a call back.**

This will take away the caller's guesswork and will eliminate them calling back two or three more times.

Return phone calls at a specified time during the day.

Don't wait until the end of the day (unless you really don't want to talk to the person.) It is also best to return calls during your least productive time of the day. You know, that time when you are a little sluggish – return some calls. It takes little creativity to return calls/answer questions.

Stand up when you are on the phone. A USC study discovered that the brain's information processing speed increases 5-20% while standing. Think you may look a little goofy standing and working? You would be in the company of Thomas Jefferson, Ernest Hemingway, and Winston Churchill, all of whom stood while working.

Keep a record of who calls, how often and why? If several calls could be consolidated into one, negotiate with the caller to limit the number of calls.



58

When leaving your number on voice mail for someone to return your call, **state your number slowly and say it twice.** It is irritating to listen to a message and then have to repeat parts of it to retrieve the number to return the call.

Want to end a conversation? If the person tends to chatter on and on, politely say, “**before we hang up I need to cover one last point . . .**” and then cover your point and get off the phone.

Be proactive in reducing “voicemail tag.” Answer **three questions** when you reach the voicemail of the person you are calling — **why** you called, **what** you need and **when** you are available for callbacks.

Unless you are talking to a friend or co-worker, **never talk about the weather** on the phone. Who cares? You're assured a long answer when you ask about the weather — definitely not a good investment of your valuable time.

Reach someone else's voicemail and don't want to hear the entire voicemail intro message? Instead of listening to the "Hi, you have reached ..." message, **dial 1**. Most of the time, you'll hear a beep and you can leave your message immediately.

Knock out some of your minor tasks from your “to do” list

while you are holding on the phone. Don't just sit there and listen to music or “commercials-on-hold.”

Invest in a **telephone headset** for your office phone. It's amazing how much you can get done if both hands are free to take notes or complete other tasks while you're talking.

Invest in a hands-free car phone and **save “friend” callbacks** until you're on the road.

Try out the **latest gadgets**. Keep looking for those that can help you gain a few minutes a day.

Meetings...Making The Most Of Them

Overview

“I’ve suffered a great many catastrophes in my life.

Most of them never happened.”

—Mark Twain

“If you’ve ever dropped loose change into a piggy bank, you were probably astonished to find how quickly those coins added up to

‘real money.’ Think of time

the same way. Each of us has small 'coins' of time we spend waiting each day: for the elevator, at the doctor's office, in the bank line. You will be amazed to learn how much free time you can buy with this 'small change' of time."

—Stephanie Winston

"Sometimes I get the feeling that the two biggest problems in America today are making ends meet and making meetings end."

– Robert Orben

Only call a meeting when it is absolutely the **best way to accomplish an objective.**

Explore all other alternatives before calling a meeting.

Make the meeting short! Most managers say that at least one-half of their meeting time is wasted. That averages out to 5 hours per week, 250 hours per year for each person involved. Wow!

Make it a goal to cut your meeting time in half. If people are prepared before they arrive, most meetings could be accomplished in half the time.

Write meeting objectives and the scheduled ending time on the board or flipchart before anyone arrives. This will keep the meeting focused and eliminate stress caused by overly long meetings.

70

If you are leading the meeting, **sit at the end of the table** so you can control the flow.



Make sure every meeting is absolutely necessary. **Routine meetings are not a good investment** unless they fulfill, or move forward, your objectives.

Look for meeting alternatives. If you can accomplish objectives by telephone, **save everyone's time** and plan a conference call.

Consolidate meetings with other meetings.

Make it a personal objective to **attend face-to-face meetings less often**...why not start today!

Every meeting should have a **published agenda** answering the most obvious questions: Why am I investing time in this meeting? How long will it last? Who's attending? What are the expectations?

If the meeting doesn't start on time, **take the responsibility** to say, "Hey, it's 9 o'clock, let's get going. It's time to get started."

Invite only the people who have something to contribute to the meeting's objectives. There should be **no “vacationers” or “slackers/hangers-on”** at the table.

Consider dismissing participants after they complete their portion of the meeting — as long as it's not important that they hear what is scheduled for the remainder of the meeting.

If you are asked to participate in someone else's meeting, communicate with the meeting leader that you would prefer to attend only the portion that relates to you. When you have completed your "dog and pony," ask if anything further is needed. If not, **excuse yourself.**

Set an **offbeat meeting time**.

People will more likely remember a meeting with a published starting time of 9:38 than they would a 9:30 meeting. Most people allow extra time (we really start at 9:40) when the meeting time is rounded to the half-hour but will hold themselves accountable for a prompt meeting if it is supposed to begin at an offbeat time. Go figure!

Always have **extra handouts** available for your participants. Better to have too many than hold everything up for those last few copies.

Start on time. If the meeting is to begin at 8:38, begin at 8:38. One of the largest expenses that ***never*** appear on the income statement is the cost of meetings. Figure it out — four \$50k employees in a four-hour meeting costs \$400 in employee time. **Respect the investment** your meeting requires.



Most of the time, **early morning meetings are best.** People are fresher, the challenges of the day have not surfaced and the odds of everyone arriving on time improve.

Do not recap what has been covered for people who are late. Ignore them when they arrive and keep going. If you recap what's been covered, you reward the tardy person and punish the "on time" folks.

Take care of the **most important item** on the agenda **first**. If nothing else is accomplished, make sure you accomplish the most important reason for calling the meeting.

Set time limits on how long you will allow people to “sell” their points. A huge time waster is people who continue to fight losing battles. Set limits on the time allowed per item and move forward.

Do not serve breakfast and meet at the same time. **Doughnuts have never added to the productivity of a meeting.** If the meeting starts at 9:00 a.m., serve breakfast at 8:30.



If meeting over lunch, cover general items that do not require focus. It is more productive to **take a 30-minute lunch break** than try to keep everyone's attention while serving/eating food. If one of your objectives is to set the scene for social bonding, allocate your mealtime to that objective.

Complete all of your agenda items before moving to unrelated topics. Put important items not scheduled for the meeting on a “parking lot” flip chart for discussion later. The parking lot issues should be part of the minutes when they are distributed.

Appoint the **last person who arrives** for the meeting as the person **responsible for taking the minutes**. Bet they will show up on time for the next meeting!

Want to abbreviate meetings?

Have a stand-up session. Get rid of the chairs and put some podiums in the room. You are assured that everyone will stay awake and will want to get to the point quickly.

Use a spiral bound notebook to capture all meeting notes. This eliminates wasting time searching for what happened at the previous meeting.

Furnish extra pens/paper to **avoid waiting for people** who go back to their offices to retrieve supplies.

Never speak while you are writing on the flip chart. Wait until you **face the audience** so you do not have to repeat what you are saying.



Use the flip chart to **maintain the meeting's direction** and to record who's responsible for action items.

Reward participants for **telling the truth**. If “messengers” are “shot down” for telling the truth, no “truthful messengers” will attend the next meeting.

Before leaving the meeting, don't assume anything! You really think everyone knows what they are supposed to do next? **Recap so everyone knows who's responsible** for next steps, when action should take place and how results will be communicated.

End the meeting on time or **END EARLY!** The minute you go past your stated time, stress levels rise and attention levels fall. Everyone enjoys the pleasant surprise of getting out early.

Get organized! Call each participant the day before and **confirm attendance**. This may not appear to be good use of your time and it should be their responsibility. However, much more time is wasted when all but one person arrives at the meeting and you are trying to “round up that last person.”

100

Do not allow time in meetings for solving hundred dollar problems when you are spending thousands of dollars on the meeting. **Focus on what is important.**

The meeting is **not over until the minutes have been distributed** (within two working days) and all action items have been accomplished.

Never leave a meeting **wondering** why you invested your time in the meeting. If the objectives were not accomplished, figure out what can be done differently to ensure that the next meeting does not end the same way.

Distribute pre-work for participants. If each person could research for all of the other participants, you can save a significant amount of time for the entire meeting.

Before leaving the meeting,
create an action plan for all of
the decisions that were made in
the meeting.

Control dominate participants
by reinforcing that you
understand their position and ask
the dominating person to listen to
the other participant's point of
view so that we can create a
course of action.

Make every meeting unique.

Do something different for each meeting like changing the location, time or room layout.

Sometimes the small changes will add energy to the group.

Meetings without specific objectives tend to achieve nothing specific.



On The Road...Making Time

The airport, airplane, taxi and hotel become your temporary offices. Make sure you get your job done while you're there.

Find an airline and rental car company you like and **stick with them**. The more familiar you are with the company, the less time you waste in the “getting to know how you operate” phase.

Find a hotel you like and **become a frequent guest**. You can eliminate filling out redundant information each time you check in.

Try to stay on one of the first three floors of a hotel. **Take the stairs.** It saves time and is good exercise.

Request a **room away from the ice machine**. You can lose a lot of sleep when the “team” arrives to fill up their ice buckets at three in the morning.

Join a **rental car “preferred” club**. You’ll eliminate stress and save at least 15 minutes on every rental.

Join an **airline club**. The financial investment is easily returned with the work that you accomplish using their club. You can knock out your e-mails, return calls, and relax in the same time it would have taken you to get your boarding pass at the counter.

113

If you are a member of a frequent flyer program, ask the agent to **“block off” the middle seat in your row.** Most of the time they will be able to accommodate you and the middle seat in your row will be the last seat available for passengers.



Create **two checklists for travel** — one for the office and one for home. Laminate the lists and keep one in your desk and one in your travel bag. The basic trip requirements are the same and this will help you double check that you have everything you need.

115

Take **only carry-on bags** when possible. This saves an average of an extra 20 minutes per flight.

Before leaving town, log on the Internet and **get directions from the airport** to your destination. Those maps are usually more reliable and more understandable than directions you get from the rental car counter.

If you travel frequently, spend the money it takes to **hire the very best administrative assistant.**

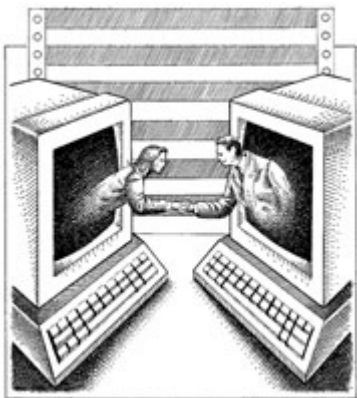
It is a wise investment! Many times your assistant is the glue that keeps everything together and moving forward while you are away.

Laptops, presentation slides and any other **tools required for meetings should be carried on the plane.** No reason to stress out over the airline baggage handling efficiencies.

When traveling internationally, **check the movement of the customs lines.** Custom agent productivity varies significantly and waiting wastes a lot of time. Hint: Shortest lines are not always the fastest.

If you are going to rely on a local Internet service provider when you get to your destination, **obtain the number needed** at your destination so that you will know how to connect when you get there.

If you are not PC proficient, have one of the IT folks execute a **“make new connection”** setup in your software before you leave. This allows you to go directly to the new dial-up icon and get right to your network and e-mails.



Carry an **extra laptop battery** so you can keep working even when the unexpected delays occur.

123

Get a cell phone plan that **does not charge “roaming” charges.**

In case of emergencies let people know where you're staying but it's always more convenient to give them your cell number.

Before leaving on an international trip, **check** these two things:
power supply requirements
and if your cell phone will work at your destination.

Get an aisle seat as close to the front of the plane as possible.

The passengers in the first five rows of a full airplane are sometimes off the plane ten minutes before the back row passengers.

If possible, request an aisle seat with **your writing arm on the aisle side**. Left-handed people should request an aisle seat on the right side of the aircraft (facing the front of the plane).

Right-handed people — well, you get the picture.

127

As soon as you get on board,
return as many phone **calls** as
you can **before the plane leaves**
the gate.

Keep a **travel folder for projects** that you can accomplish while on a plane or in a taxi.

If you do not have time to socialize during the flight, invest in a good pair of headphones that have “white noise.” It eliminates almost all the noise of the plane and most people will not disturb you. If that does not work, politely **tell the talkative person next to you** that you must complete your work before you land. Hopefully, they’ll give you the courtesy of being quiet.

Learn something new! **Listen to audiotapes** or take a training course on your computer during the flight.

Keep a file on the personnel in the cities you are visiting. It's always impressive to walk in, **call the receptionist by name** and ask about a son or daughter's soccer season. They'll never forget you!

Before leaving the office, make sure everyone knows what needs to be done while you are gone and ask your staff to **sort the mail and condense it** to action items while you are away.

Always **carry emergency cash** — enough for taxi, tips and some for “just in case.” You probably do not want to be wasting your time looking for an ATM in an unfamiliar city.

Complete your expense documentation as the expenses occur. Do not try to reconstruct your expenses later. Maintain a **tally of expenses** in your organizer and throw the receipts in a pocket file. As soon as you get back home immediately submit receipts/expense report.

Where did you park your car?
Write down the exact location
in your organizer. Isn't it funny —
how your car sometimes “moves”
while you are gone? This can
save you untold time frantically
searching parking lots.



Organizing Yourself...

First Things FIRST

Overview

“Unlike other resources, time cannot be bought or sold, borrowed or stolen, stocked up or saved, manufactured, reproduced, or modified.



All we can do is make use of it. And whether we used it or not, it nevertheless slips away.”

—Jean-Louis Servan-

Schreiber

*Ulcers are something you
get from mountain climbing
over molehills.*



Work smarter, not harder.

Doing inefficient things “harder” does not do anything but wear you out faster. Figure out ways to shorten tasks by eliminating steps, combining parts and getting more done by working easier.

Manage your to-do list. Start with the most important task and **work down**. If you accomplish nothing other than your number one priority, you'll be ahead. Avoid the temptation to tackle fun or easy tasks first just because you like shorter lists.

Never throw business cards into a drawer. That is a good way to frustrate yourself and waste some time trying to retrieve it. Enter the info into a database then throw out the card.

Frequently ask your self the #1 time management question of all time: What's the **best use of my time...RIGHT NOW?**

Want to attack procrastination?

Write down your goals twice a day. You'll become more focused on getting the important things done.

Do everything faster! Walk a step faster, write e-mails faster and get off the phone faster. Search for times where you can gain a few seconds that will add up to a few minutes a day.



Leave yourself reminder voicemails. When you are driving and have that “ah-ha” idea, **send yourself a voicemail** while the idea is fresh on your mind. You’ll save time trying to remember the brilliant idea that slipped your mind.

According to the Pareto Principle,
**80% of your results will come
from 20% of your activities.**

Want to be more efficient? Figure
out the 20% that are your most
important activities and spend
your time mastering those
activities.

Use your energy according to your personal peak times. Take on the **creative projects when you are the sharpest** and do the mundane stuff when you're least creative. Not everybody is a morning person!

Check yourself and discover how you are spending your time. Do you spend time doing the right things or the wrong things? Well, how well are you doing them? You may be doing the right things wrong or the wrong things right.

Focus your energy on doing the right things right!

Create a **short-task list** — things that could be done in five minutes or less. Hint! Sometimes you can complete the entire list while you are waiting on hold.

Create a **10-20 minute file**. Most people have at least twice a day when an unexpected 20-minute gap comes up. When those gaps happen, knock out some of your to-do list.

A place for everything and everything in its place. It still works! Searching for your stapler, calculator, note pad or pen is a time-waster, creating stress and frustration. Oh, by the way, throw away those dead batteries. It is a waste of time – and frustrating – to be searching for the good batteries among the dead batteries.

Are you a paper shuffler? If so, **mark the top of the paper** every time you touch it. These tick marks will remind you you're wasting time every time you touch that paper.



Create an e-mail address book and distribution list for those with whom you frequently communicate. Not only will you save time looking up addresses, you'll save a lot of typing time. Ten keystrokes saved on fifty e-mails a day equals 125,000 keystrokes saved a year. You know how long it takes to press "a" 125,000 times? Don't try it! Just take our word.

Buy a **small tape recorder** and put it **next to your bed**. Now, you can capture all those great ideas that seem to “vanish into thin air” when you wake up.



General rule: if it takes less than five minutes, **get it done now.**

Set **specific goals** for two weeks and write the goals down. Then, focus your attention on activities that lead to achieving those goals. You will be surprised how much you can accomplish if you put your goals on paper.

“Group” similar tasks together. You’ll have all the necessary materials together and can save valuable time not having to refocus for each separate task. Fewer transitions between tasks improve your productivity.

Develop an “**in-today, out-tomorrow**” process for all mail coming into your office.

Keep reading materials handy when you go to the doctor's office. Most magazines in waiting rooms are from last year anyway, and you waste time just sitting.

Never open e-mails from people whose names you do not recognize or subjects are not important to you. **There's too much "spam"** requiring too much time to filter through every e-mail that you receive — and there's too many viruses floating around out there.

Rip and read. Quickly scan the magazines that show up on your desk, evaluate which articles you want to read, **tear them out and save** for the right time for you to read. Throw away the rest of the magazine. You waste time flipping through the same pages to get to the one article you want to read.

Gr-r-r! **Attack procrastination!**

Do it now! Putting things off seldom improves the quality of your work. It also adds stress when you know that you have something to do that should have already been done.



Reward yourself when you complete a task you wanted to delay. It will give incentive to knock out other unpleasant tasks.

“Learn how to separate the majors from the minors. A lot of people don’t do well simply because they major in minor things.”

— Jim Rohn

You can never get much of anything done unless you go ahead and do it before you are ready.

Time For Yourself... And What's Important

“Time is a natural resource — like fuel. When it is abundant, we take it for granted; when it becomes scarce, we search for that extra gallon, regardless of cost. Wouldn't you give anything for another gallon of time with some of your friends who are gone? Time is a precious gift — every second, every minute, every day — use it wisely.

*You cannot pay the cost of
losing time.”*

— Sonny Gann

Get your rest! The more rested you are, the more you can accomplish in a shorter period. If you're tired, you're usually slower, rework more and end up even more exhausted. **Take care of yourself!**

Become a champion at minimizing the work you take home for the weekend. **Leave enough time to recharge** your battery.

Go to lunch at 11:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. to save time both in the line and the time that it takes to get your food. Going to lunch at noon will conservatively cost you at least 15 minutes a day... and the tip's the same. Think that is a good deal?

Use a home delivery grocery service. Unless you really enjoy the sights, sounds, and lines at the grocery store, **let someone else spend their time for you.** Most of the services are free of charge.

Start your morning the night before! **Lay out your clothes the night before**, including knowing where you left your shoes (this is important!). Put items needed for work the next day in your car the night before.

Fill up your car on the way home from work. Don't waste your prime morning time at the pump.

Buy your postage electronically. Does anyone really enjoy standing in line at the post office?

Pay your bills electronically. You can **save at least half the time** when paying monthly bills and save money on postage. That's a good deal!

Worry is a time and energy robber. It's natural to worry, but you can **shorten the time between** when you **start worrying** and when you begin **doing something** about it.



Turn off the TV. (Yes, really turn it off!) Enjoy favorite programs but turn the television off when you're just veggin' in front of the tube. Ask yourself; "Does this program really contribute to my personal or professional goals?" If not, you may want to turn it off, or at least change the channel.

If you enjoy watching television, **tape your favorite shows** and watch the videotape at your convenience. Fast- forwarding through commercials will save you about 15 minutes of every hour.

Buy a **coffee pot with a timer**
and get it ready before you go to
bed.

Plot your route to work and **find services**, such as dry cleaners, automobile repair, etc. **on your way**. Stop spending your valuable time trying to save a few pennies. Don't drive across town to save a few cents on items that you could pick up on the way to work. It's not worth your time.

Listen to audiotapes on the way to work. Pick one day every week and learn something. The average person spends 500 hours per year in their car. Why not use some of that time to **grow personally or professionally** — or to just be entertained. You deserve it!



Bonus!

176

Give a copy of this book to your spouse, coworkers and friends. The better you become at managing your time, the more time you will have to enjoy each other.